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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: JANUARY 05, 2010

Summary: Coverage of a variety of public statements by President Zardari dominated front pages today, including his declaration that "Pakistan's desire for peace is not a weakness." General Stanley McChrystal's remarks made during his visit yesterday received wide coverage in nearly all English language dailies. Papers reported the General's statements on ISAF and Pakistan military coordination, development of a joint Pakistan-U.S. counter-insurgency campaign, and the shrinking trust deficit between U.S. and Pakistan forces. All major English dailies highlighted reports that travelers from Pakistan and thirteen other nations will be subject to full body searches before boarding U.S. bound flights. The News published a report that the head of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazi has asked the GoP to end its alliance with the U.S., blaming the government's pro-U.S. policies for the rise in terrorist attacks in Pakistan. All major dailies continued coverage of the alleged American Jihadis, reporting that the suspects denied plotting terrorism in Pakistan. End Summary.

TOP STORIES

News Story: Armed Forces Capable Of Safeguarding Pakistan: Zardari; Pak Desire For Peace Not a Weakness - "The News" (01/05)

"President Asif Ali Zardari said on Monday that the armed forces of Pakistan were capable of safeguarding the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. He was addressing the 92nd officers commissioning parade of the Pakistan Navy at the Pakistan Naval Academy. 'Pakistan is a peace-loving nation and we are willing to go an extra mile to resolve all issues through dialogue. We sincerely hope that the solutions we achieve are just, principled and long-lasting. However, our desire for peace must not be taken as a sign of weakness,' the president said."

News Story: Joint Pakistan-U.S. Action Against Taliban In The Offing - "Dawn," "The News," "Daily Times" (01/05)

"Pakistan and the United States are working on a plan to take joint military action against Taliban and launch coordinated attacks on both sides of the Pak-Afghan border, according to Gen. Stanley McChrystal, Commander of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. He was talking to reporters at the residence of the U.S. Ambassador on Monday evening after holding talks with military commanders in Islamabad and visiting Swat.... Gen. McChrystal, who was all praise for the military's counter-insurgency campaign and the leadership of Army chief Gen. Kayani, said he had no reasons to doubt Pakistan Army's sincerity."

News Story: Date Not Fixed For Joint Strategic Dialogue: U.S.

Embassy" - "Jang" (01/05)

"The U.S. Embassy in Islamabad has refuted any deferral in the Joint Strategic Dialogue between Pakistan and the United States saying that no date had been set for the next meeting. Talking to the media on Monday, U.S. Embassy spokesman, Richard Snelsire, said that both countries are working to finalize the schedule for the next session of Pak-U.S. Joint Strategic Dialogue."

News Story: Pakistanis, Citizens Of 13 Other States Face More Stringent Airport Checks - "Dawn" (01/05)

"At the U.S. behest, airports across the world introduced enhanced security checks from Monday for citizens of 14 countries, including Pakistan. The measures, implemented in response to the attempted Christmas Day bombing of a U.S. airliner, include extensive full body searches, swabbing of luggage to detect explosives and body scans. The U.S. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) divided those 14 countries into two categories - 'state sponsors of terrorism and countries of interest.'"

News Story: JUI-F Chief Asks Govt. To Quit - "The News" (01/05)

"Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has asked the government to quit the United States-led alliance against terror and implement the resolution unanimously passed by parliament for formulating anti-terror policies to safeguard Pakistan's integrity. 'It is due to the government's pro-U.S. policies that the war on terror has reached our homeland and now lives and properties of the people are not safe,' he said while talking to reporters on Monday in Lakki Marwat."
TERRORISM/MILITARY ISSUES

News Story: Americans Deny They Planned To Carry Out Attacks - "Dawn" (01/05)

"Five Americans suspected of using the Internet to contact militant groups to carry out terrorist attacks told an anti-terrorism court in Sargodha on Monday they had only wanted to give fellow Muslims financial and medical aid in Afghanistan. The students, in their 20s and from the U.S. state of Virginia, were detained last month."

News Story: U.S. Citizen Acquitted After Police Drop Charges - "The News" (01/05)

"Anti-Terrorism Court Judge Muhammad Anwar Nazir on Monday acquitted a U.S. citizen after police dropped charges against him and sent five others to jail for 14 days. Earlier, the police produced Khalid Farooq, Umar, Aman Ahmed, Waqar and Rami before the court. The court also directed the police to submit the Challan on January 18."

News Story: U.S. Military Is Exhausted: Report - "Pakistan Observer" (01/05)

"The call for over 30,000 more troops to be sent to Afghanistan is a travesty for the people of that country who have already suffered eight brutal years of occupation. It is also a harsh blow to the U.S. soldiers facing imminent deployment. As Barack Obama, the U.S. President, gears up for a further escalation that will bring the total number of troops in Afghanistan to over 100,000, he faces a military force that has been exhausted and overextended by fighting two wars, reports Al Jazeera."

News Story: Karachi Target Killings Have Claimed 256 Lives - "The News" (01/05)

"As many as 256 people, including workers of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), the MQM (Haqiqi), the PPP and the ANP, have so far fallen prey to target killings in Karachi. Interior Minister Rehman Malik, while expressing concern over the target killings, has directed the departments concerned to take immediate measures to punish the culprits. A high-level meeting, chaired by Rehman Malik in Islamabad on Monday, took stock of the ever-increasing incidents of target killings in Karachi. Senior officials in the Ministry of Interior, the government of Sindh, intelligence agencies and rangers attended the meeting."

News Story: Rangers In Karachi To Get More Powers - "Dawn" (01/05)

"The government has decided to give more powers to Rangers deployed in Karachi under the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA), allowing the paramilitary force to arrest anyone involved in violence for 90 days, a source in the Interior Ministry told 'Dawn' on Monday."

News Story: Militants Burn Village In Lower Orakzai - "Dawn" (01/05)

"According to officials, armed men of the proscribed Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan raided the village of Tori Mela and set on fire 63 houses which had been lying vacant for about a month because most tribesmen had moved to other areas, leaving behind one or two members of their families to take care of their belongings. Local people said the Tehrik-i-Taliban had 'punished' tribesmen because of their refusal to stay on in the village and support them in their fight against security forces."

News Story: Time to Directly Hit Militants, Says Mian Iftikhar - "The News" (01/05)

"NWFP Minister for Information Mian Iftikhar Hussain on Monday said that peace in the country could be restored only if all the terrorists' organizations and their training centers and dens were eliminated, while talking to reporters in Peshawar."

News Story: Seven Terrorists Killed, 2 Arrested In Bajaur Agency - "Daily Times" (01/05)

"Security forces destroyed two militant hideouts on Monday killing 7 and arresting two others in Operation Sherdil in the Bajaur Agency, it was reported."

News Story: Driver Killed As NATO Trailer Ambushed - "The News" (01/05)

"Another trailer transporting goods for NATO forces stationed in Afghanistan was attacked on Ring Road, Peshawar, resulting into the killing of the driver and injuries to the cleaner."

POLITICAL ISSUES

News Story: Top Indian, Pakistani Media Groups Join Hands For Peace - "The News" (01/01)

"The turn of the decade brings with it a momentous shot in the arm to the moribund Indo-Pak peace process with the unveiling of a grand cross-border collaborative peace project. The initiative, titled Aman Ki Asha, promises to be a path-breaking collaboration between Pakistan's Jang Group and Geo and India's Times of India Group, the largest media groups on their respective sides of the border. It will look to inject impetus into the Indo-Pak dialogue in a manner that is unparalleled, on a scale that is unprecedented. The project aims to provide the ultimate mutual platform to debate the major sticking points in the hitherto fickle peace dialogue on both sides of the border - whether it is Kashmir, the water dispute or security. The mission statement is unequivocal, declaring that the two groups commit themselves to a movement that will bring the people and civil institutions of the two countries closer together in fostering an honorable, genuine and durable peace."

News Story: Zardari Breaks 'Siege,' Takes On Opponents - "Dawn" (01/05)

"President Asif Ali Zardari, in a serious move to dispel the impression of being a beleaguered head of state, has stepped up his public engagements, and on Monday alone he made appearance at three places in the city to attend to both official and political matters. But even otherwise his participation as the chief guest at the Mohatta Palace function, giving a go-ahead to the Hyderabad-Mirpurkhas dual carriageway project and meeting PPP's parliamentarians, as a diehard PPP activist said, aimed at sending a clear message to his opponents that he was determined to fight back."

News Story: Nawaz Seeks Trial Of Bugti's Killers - "The News" (01/05)

"PML-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif said on Monday that there was no logic in apologizing to the people of Balochistan for the past mistakes unless the real issues, including action against the killers of Nawab Akbar Bugti and recovery of missing persons, are addressed. 'If the wounds of the people of Balochistan are to be assuaged then social and economic justice must be done,' Nawaz said while talking to newsmen soon after his arrival in Quetta after 11 years."

News Story: Nawaz Says Baloch Jirga To Settle PPP-PML-N Row - "Dawn" (01/05)

"Pakistan Muslim League-N Chief Nawaz Sharif has empowered a Baloch Jirga, headed by Balochistan Chief Minister Nawab Aslam Raisani and the chief of Jhalawan Sardar Sanaullah Zehri, for removing differences between his party and the Pakistan People's Party. 'The PML-N will accept whatever verdict the Jirga gives according to Baloch traditions and on the basis of justice,' he told Mr. Raisani in Quetta on Monday."

News Story: SC Asked Courts, Not NAB, To Reopen NRO Cases - "The News" (01/05)

"An accountability court judge in Rawalpindi on Monday observed that the Supreme Court (SC), in its December 16 judgment, had directed the trial courts to reopen the cases and not to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). 'We are accordingly examining the cases and summoning the accused, and it is the courts to decide whether or not the cases to proceed,' the Accountability Court judge observed."

News Story: NAB Acts On Its Own Despite SC Verdict - "The News" (01/05)

"The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has admitted that the pre-NRO situation vis-a-vis President Asif Ali Zardari has not been restored and his cases remained closed while there are no freezing orders issued regarding his bank accounts and the moveable and immovable assets. This is apparently a glaring violation of the Supreme Court order but NAB insists that in its legal view the president under Article 248 of the Constitution enjoys immunity that bars NAB to restore the pre-NRO position in case of Asif Ali Zardari."

ECONOMY/ENVIRONMENT

News Story: ADB Wants No CDWP Role in Foreign Funded Projects - "The News" (01/05)

"Terming portfolio performance of foreign funded projects in Pakistan 'worst' in the region, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has asked the government to reduce procedures even by abolishing Planning Commission's forum - Central Development Working Party (CDWP) - that is authorized to approve projects up to one billion rupees. On the other hand, the World Bank (WB) has raised certain objections in a presentation given to Prime Minister Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani in which it was pointed out that certain flaws existed in the processes and procedures involved in approving development projects in Pakistan. The WB has recommended the government to abandon the existing method and adopt its strategy which was based on seven steps for approving projects."

MISCELLANEOUS

News Story: UN Envoy For 'Demilitarized' Approach In Afghanistan - "The News" (01/05)

"The international community must demilitarize its overall approach in Afghanistan to ensure sustainable gains in the political and humanitarian realms, the outgoing UN envoy to the war-torn country said on Monday. 'We have to get into a mode where our strategy is politically driven and not militarily driven, where the political and civilian components become an appendix to a military strategy,' Kai Eide, the Secretary-General's Special Rep, said in Kabul, according to a news release issued at the UN headquarters in New York."

EDITORIALS/OPINIONS

Editorial: Al Qaeda in Yemen, an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (01/05)

"Yemen, it appears, is the new Fata, an Al Qaeda base where wicked plans to destroy western civilization and overthrow governments are being hatched. Or at least that is the gist of some of the more hyperbolic commentary since the Christmas Day attempted plane bombing in the U.S. was linked to an Al Qaeda offshoot in Yemen.... Clearly, Yemen has the type of conditions Al Qaeda would like to exploit: high unemployment, serious levels of poverty, water shortages, declining oil revenues, a population suspicious of the West, a strongman president inclined to support the West on occasion, and a secessionist movement in one part of the country and a bitter insurgency being fought in another part."

Editorial: Deciphering The Silence Of Friends Of Pakistan, an editorial in the country's premier business newspaper, "Business Recorder" (cir. 25,000) (01/05)

"Talking to media-men at the signing ceremony of an MoU between PIA and PRI to boost the inflow of home remittances on 29th December, Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin nearly lost patience over Friends of Democratic Pakistan's abject failure in extending the promised assistance to the country. Looking desperate, he asked the FoDP to clarify whether or not they were providing the pledged assistance to Pakistan.... Criticizing the role of the FoDP, he remarked, of course with a tinge of sadness, that 'we are not untouchables for whom they are using the delaying tactics.'... We would like to remind the Finance Minister that in international diplomacy, there are certain things which are self-evident but not spoken openly to avoid embarrassment. It is not necessary for the donor countries to say loudly that they will not be able to meet the commitments made earlier because of a change in the domestic or international environment. Their silence on the matter should be enough to convey the intended message."

Editorial: What's In Store In 2010?, an editorial in the country's premier business newspaper, "Business Recorder" (cir. 25,000) (01/05)

"As we enter 2010, the Pak-U.S. relationship has arrived at a tipping point, where one wrong move can push it over the edge. Whatever the findings of the Western think-tanks and analysts, the fact remains that the U.S.-led coalition forces cannot win the war in Afghanistan without the active and willing co-operation of Pakistan. The geopolitics of the region surrounding Pakistan is going to remain in ferment, not alone because of the war in Afghanistan - there are many other equally important factors that impinge upon regional security and balance of power."

Editorial: Respond To India In The Same Tone, an editorial in the second-largest, nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (01/05)

"Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has said that the purpose behind the Indian Army Chief's statement regarding China and Pakistan is to introduce India's military prowess to the region.... It was Indian threats and aggressive stance that led Pakistani Defense Minister Ahmad Mukhtar to say that Pakistan would be compelled to change its conciliatory stance if India does not change its attitude. This is an encouraging statement for the nation. [The government must] take a step further and give up this policy of reconciliation altogether."

Editorial: Mr. Prime Minister, What Have You Done To Rectify This Mistake?, an editorial in the second-largest, nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (01/05)

"Talking with journalists, Prime Minister Gillani has said that that not implementing the Charter of Democracy is the government's biggest mistake and that it should have been implemented the first day [in power].... The fact is that repealing the 17th Amendment under the Charter of Democracy does not suit either the President or the PM. However, whenever there is some pressure from the opposition, the PM makes such a statement to appease [the nation]. In the present grave situation where the nation is screaming due to major issues and good governance is lacking, what hope can there be

of strengthening democracy with such a non-serious attitude."

Opinion: Whose War Is Being Waged?, an op-ed by Iqbal Akhund in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (01/05)

"The U.S.-Pakistan relationship, rarely very smooth, is going through a particularly bad patch at present. It carries a load of past resentments, grievances and disappointments. Paradoxically, the more America tries to make amends, talk of a long-term relationship, the more it seems to feed suspicions of its intentions at the popular level. One is asked, 'Why is America offering money and making a fuss over Pakistan now? It must have a purpose of its own!' - taking away our nukes; turning Pakistan into a 'secular' country; breaking it up altogether. The fact, however, is that the U.S. does, at this juncture, wish Pakistan well - not because it sees Pakistan as a friend but, on the contrary, because it sees it as a potentially dangerous enemy - a country with nuclear weapons and technology (that it sold abroad), politically unstable, facing every sort of economic and social problem, where a variety of armed and radical Tehriks and Lashkars and Jamaats etc, with sympathizers in the establishment, have had a free run for years and could get their hands on the nuclear weapons."

Opinion: Waziristan War In Critical Stage, an op-ed by Rahimullah Yusufzai in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (01/05)

"Already suffering from the fall-out of the eight-year-old U.S.-led war against the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, Pakistan is now confronted with arguably the most dangerous phase of the seemingly endless battle. This is a critical stage also for the future of Islamabad's uneasy relationship with Washington.... Pakistan's dilemma in these difficult times is hard to explain.... However, Pakistan has to pay a huge price for remaining a U.S. ally. At a time when public opinion surveys show more than 80 per cent of Pakistanis opposing U.S. policies and mentioning it as a bigger threat to Pakistan than India, Al Qaeda and Taliban, it cannot be easy for any government or military to justify an unpopular alliance with America.... It won't be easy for Pakistan to extricate itself from a suffocating embrace with the U.S. and even if it were to happen, the consequences would be painful."

Opinion: A Zionist Dagger In Pakistan's Western Front, an op-ed by Tanweer Qaiser Shahid in the liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir.25,000) (01/05)

"According to the latest reports, several members of the Israeli secret service Mossad have spread their tentacles in Afghanistan with Indian help. Both Pakistan and Iran could become simultaneous targets of Israeli plans and conspiracies.... Israeli presence in Afghanistan means that a Zionist dagger has pierced our western front...Two major Israeli newspapers printed in Hebrew "Yediot Aharonot" and "Maariv" bear witness to the fact that Mossad and the Israeli Foreign Ministry made efforts for formal contact with the Taliban rulers [in the late 1990s]. In 1999, "Yediot Aharonot" revealed the Afghan-Israeli connection for the first time.... There are also reports of the presence of dozens of Israeli citizens in Afghanistan's north and north-western provinces. To keep a lid on their real Israeli identity, they have been given dual-nationality passports. Hence some of them are Israeli-born Britons, some Israeli-origin Americans. Israeli activities in Afghanistan are not two- or three-pronged, but multifaceted. Can any good be expected of Israel? And that too, in Afghanistan? When will our eyes open?"

Opinion: Economics And Extremism, an op-ed by Shahid Javed Burki in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (01/05)

"There cannot be any doubt that there is a relationship between poor economic performance and the rise of extremism and resort to insurgency.... In Pakistan these economic disparities have resulted in great violence against the state and the citizens of the country. Some of the elements within society have been behind violence mostly for ideological, reasons. Insurgency in Pakistan has been caused by the merger of several different streams. If we look at the growth of extremism in the country we see that it is concentrated in the more backward parts of the country."

Opinion: Iran And The West, an op-ed by Javid Husain in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (01/05)

"Iran's relations with the U.S. as the leader of the west are likely to remain troubled in the foreseeable future, despite the fact that President Barack Obama earlier this year extended the hand of friendship towards Iran. The main reason is that the U.S. foreign policy and security establishment continues to view the Islamic Republic of Iran as a major obstacle in the realization of its strategic objectives in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf region. Those objectives are control over the oil and gas resources of the Persian Gulf region, ensuring the security of Israel as the U.S. outpost in the heartland of the Middle East, and the preservation of regimes which tow the U.S. line on major foreign policy issues."

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)
Patterson